

# UPDATE

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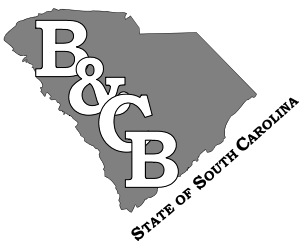
## **Anthrax**

### **What are the signs and symptoms of Anthrax?**

Symptoms of disease vary depending on how the disease was contracted, but symptoms usually occur within 7 days.

- Cutaneous anthrax is the most common naturally occurring type of infection and usually occurs after skin contact with contaminated meat, wool, hides or leather from infected animals. The incubation period ranges from 1-12 days. The skin infection begins as a small papule, progresses to a vesicle in 1-2 days followed by a necrotic ulcer. The lesion is usually painless, but patients also may have fever, malaise, headache and regional lymphadenopathy. Most (about 95%) anthrax infections occur when the bacterium enters a cut or abrasion on the skin. Skin infection begins as a raised bump that resembles a spider bite, but (within 1-2 days) it develops into a vesicle and then a painless ulcer, usually 1-3 cm in diameter, with a characteristic black necrotic (dying) area in the center. Lymph glands in the adjacent area may swell. About 20% of untreated cases of cutaneous anthrax will result in death. Deaths are rare if patients are given appropriate antimicrobial therapy.
- Inhalational anthrax is the most lethal form of anthrax. Anthrax spores must be aerosolized in order to cause inhalational anthrax. Studies show that 4,000 – 5,000 spores must be present to cause an infection. The incubation period of inhalational anthrax among humans is unclear, but it is reported to range from 1 to 7 days, possibly ranging up to 60 days. It resembles a viral respiratory illness and initial symptoms include sore throat, mild fever, muscle aches and malaise. These symptoms may progress to respiratory failure and shock with meningitis frequently developing.
- Gastrointestinal anthrax usually follows the consumption of raw or undercooked contaminated meat and has an incubation period of 1-7 days. It is associated with severe abdominal distress followed by fever and signs of septicemia. The disease can take an oropharyngeal or abdominal form. Involvement of the pharynx is usually characterized by lesions at the base of the tongue, sore throat, dysphagia, fever and regional lymphadenopathy. Lower bowel inflammation usually causes nausea, loss of appetite, vomiting and fever, followed by abdominal pain, vomiting blood and bloody diarrhea.

Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information about anthrax.



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